

THE AGED WOMEN AND THE YOUNG WOMEN

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The following is an except from the Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies Course *The Pastoral Epistles*:

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:3-5)

Titus teaches us that it is not enough to profess Christ; the Christian profession must be lived out in everyday life.

We also see in Titus that the preacher must make the truth practical; he must apply it to every part of life and to every different sort of person. “Ministers must not stay in generals, but must divide to every one his portion, what belongs to his age, or place, or condition of life; they must be particular as well as practical in their preaching; they must teach men their duty, and must teach all and each his duty” (Matthew Henry).

THE AGED WOMEN (Titus 2:3-4)

“in behaviour as becometh holiness” (Titus 2:3)

a. They live their lives in such a way as to bring glory to the Christ that they profess. People are always watching how we live; others are always affected. The elderly men and women must be examples to the younger believers. The older believers are mentioned first in Titus 2 because they set the standard for morality in the churches.

b. They follow holy things rather than unholy and worldly. Elderly Christian women must be careful that they do not give themselves to evil things such as ungodly literature and television programs and movies and immodest dress. I recall an elderly woman who professed Christ who kept sensual romance magazines in

her home, some of which even contained pornographic stories, and her grandchildren were corrupted by these. I know of other elderly believers who spend much of their time watching unwholesome television shows and Hollywood movies. In his autobiography, the rock singer Marilyn Manson describes how he was influenced by wicked literature that was kept in the basement of his grandfather's house. This type of thing should not be once named among the saints.

c. My own maternal grandmother, Julia Pollock, had a testimony of "behaviour as becometh holiness." She filled her last years with prayers and good works and holy living. When one would visit her, he would find no unwholesome magazines or books; he would never find her watching unwholesome television programs. More often than not she would be sitting in her favorite chair crocheting something to give away or to sell so that she could give the proceeds to missions, or she would be reading her tear-stained Bible and praying for her children, grandchildren, pastor, neighbors, acquaintances, and missionaries. She had the habit of writing down some of her prayers, and it was wonderful to see the way that God answered them. She was the first Christian I ever met who practiced fasting and prayer, and she witnessed some miraculous answers to prayer by this means. Though she had a serious heart condition for the final decade of her life and suffered greatly, she was cheerful and always had a good word of encouragement for her visitors and a challenge from the Scriptures. She and my grandfather had lived through the "great depression" and she always testified that God will take care of His own regardless of the situation. She loved Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," and she often quoted it. She told of how the Lord miraculously provided for them when no jobs were available. I am confident that the earnest prayers of this godly woman had a large part in my conversion in the summer of 1973, because she exemplified "behaviour as becometh holiness."

"not false accusers" (Titus 2:3)

a. This refers to backbiting, saying evil things against other church members to hurt them, sowing discord by spreading rumors without caring whether they are true, speaking maliciously against people that she doesn't like.

b. This is a description of the devil himself. He is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). Though some of the things that the devil has to say against the brethren are true, he does not take into account the Lord's grace and he always has a malicious motive to tear down rather than build up.

c. It is not wrong to “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15), to warn of things that are false, and to know what is going on in the assembly in order to be a blessing and help. The spiritual are obligated to help those who are overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1-2). The household of Chloe informed Paul of what was going on at Corinth and Paul used that information to correct the church (1 Cor. 1:11). What is forbidden in Titus 2:13 is “false accusation” and attacks against the brethren that are malicious and that are intended to injure rather than edify.

“not given to much wine” (Titus 2:3)

a. This is the Greek phrase “*me* (not) *doulōō* (given to) *polus* (much) *oinos* (wine).” The Greek word “*doulōō*” means to be enslaved, to be brought under bondage (Strong). It is also translated “bring into bondage” (Acts 7:6), “become a servant” (Rom. 6:18), and “servant” (1 Cor. 9:19).

b. The elder women must avoid being enslaved by alcohol or drugs or anything else that would hinder their Christian lives and testimonies.

c. Paul was referring to the exceedingly weak wine of those days and not to the wine and beer of our day. The following quotes by Norman Geisler and Robert Stein are from the *Focus in Missions*, September 1986: “Many wine-drinking Christians today mistakenly assume that what the New Testament meant by wine is identical to wine used today. This, however, is false. In fact, today’s wine is by biblical definition strong drink, and hence is forbidden in the Bible [Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35]. ... Even ancient pagans did not drink what some Christians drink today” (Geisler). “...to consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis today, by drinking wine containing three parts water to one part wine (the biblical ratio), a person would have to drink over 22 glasses” (Stein).

“teachers of good things” (Titus 2:3-4)

a. Women have an important role in the teaching ministry of the church, but they are not to teach men (1 Tim. 2:12). They are to teach children (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15) and other women.

b. The elder women must prepare themselves for such a ministry by learning how to be godly wives, mothers, and homemakers themselves.

c. They must teach good things as opposed to false or evil or vain and empty things. Every woman is teaching something by her words and life; she must ask herself, “What am I teaching and what is the fruit of it?” Too many Christian women are experts in many worldly things but not in godly living.

d. Many churches fail to provide this practical training for young wives and mothers and the result is spiritual weakness and sin. If the young women do not learn their responsibilities from godly older women, they often find help from secular sources or from carnal women and are thus led astray.

e. Thus we see the importance of the qualifications for wives of pastors and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:11 -- “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.” This describes the things that are to be taught to younger women in Titus 2:4-5. If the wives of the church officers are not godly women who are an example to others and who can instruct the younger women in the practical aspects of godly home life, the work of God will be greatly weakened.

f. This does not mean, of course, that the work of teaching the younger women is limited to the wives of church officers. Titus 2 does not limit this ministry in such a manner, and neither should the churches. But it is important to understand that if the wives of the pastors and deacons are not godly women after the fashion of 1 Tim. 3:11 and if they are not busy in the ministry of Titus 2:3-5, not only will they themselves not teach the younger women the things they need to learn, but they will probably make it difficult or impossible for any other mature women in the church to exercise such a ministry.

g. The husbands and pastors must oversee this female ministry so that the women do not fall into error and are not led astray like Eve was.

THE YOUNG WOMEN (Titus 2:4-5)

“to be sober” (Titus 2:4)

a. This is the Greek word “sophron,” which means sober-minded, self-controlled, spiritually disciplined.

b. It is the opposite of being foolish and careless and vain. It refers to a woman who is wise, spiritually-minded, who is mindful of eternal values, not carried away by the vanities of this world, the things to which unregenerate women are devoted.

(1) It refers to a woman who is not caught up, for example, in worshipping Hollywood and pop stars.

(2) A woman who is not giddy after the sensual products of the fashion industry

(3) A woman who is not inordinately consumed with physical beauty, recognizing that beauty without godliness is of no value before God (Prov. 11:22; 31:30).

“to love their husbands ... children” (Titus 2:4)

a. Biblical love is not an emotion but a commitment. It can be learned and taught, whereas a feeling cannot. To love one’s husband and children in a godly manner means to commit oneself to them, to give oneself to doing those things for them that a godly wife and mother should do. When someone says, “I don’t love my wife anymore,” or “I don’t love my husband anymore,” they actually mean, “I don’t have that romantic feeling anymore,” but feelings come and go and feelings are not the essence of biblical love. When we commit ourselves before God to doing good for another person and to treating him or her as God commands, feelings follow.

b. Women have wonderful natural gifts from God for their work in the home, but they also must *learn* how to do these things, and they should make progress in their service as wives and mothers.

d. The older women cannot teach the younger women to love their husbands scripturally unless they have loved their own. Sometimes older Christian women do not show a godly example of submission to their husbands and of a meek and quiet spirit; therefore, they teach a bad lesson to the younger women by their example.

e. Children are loved in a scriptural manner not by pampering and doting on them but by disciplining them after the fashion taught in Proverbs. “... not a fond foolish love, indulging them in evil, neglecting due reproof and correction where necessary, but a regular Christian love, showing itself in their pious education, forming their life and manners aright, taking care of their souls as well as of their bodies, of their spiritual welfare as well as of their temporal, of the former chiefly and in the first place” (Matthew Henry).

(1) Children are to be trained up in the way that they should go (Prov. 22:6). The parents must teach them the truth and must be careful about every aspect of the children's education. Children cannot be trained in the way they should go if they are sent to schools where they are educated by unbelievers or if they are in a church that does not teach godly Christian living.

(2) Children are to be corrected when they do not obey (Prov. 22:15; 29:17). Many mothers do not correct their children in such a way that they learn obedience. They ignore, even smile at, rebellion. Or they make an attempt at discipline, but it is too weak to produce obedience. I recall a Christian mother who "disciplined" her extremely self-willed toddler son by lightly spanking him on his padded disposable diaper. He only laughed! The discipline must produce submission of the will and obedience, or it is ineffective. Some mothers also resist and undermine the father's efforts to discipline the children. A wise and godly mother will discipline the children herself and will stand united with the father when he tries to discipline them (assuming, of course, that it is being done in a scriptural manner).

(3) Children are not to be left to themselves (Prov. 29:15). The parents are to lovingly oversee every aspect of the children's lives. Parents must know who the children's friends are, where they spend their time, what they are reading and listening to. If the children are allowed to grow up without close supervision, they will bring shame to their parents. The reason is because "foolishness is bound in the heart of the child" and he does not naturally know how to go in the right way.

"to be discreet" (Titus 2:5)

a. This is the same Greek word ("sophron") that is translated "sober" in verse 4. The Holy Spirit is thus emphasizing to the women the importance of sobermindedness, of spiritual and moral vigilance. The reason this is so emphasized is because of the woman's weaker nature and her greater susceptibility to deception (1 Tim. 2:14). Eve sinned because she did not maintain vigilance and because she thought she was capable of making decisions that should have been left to her husband. She was not sober; she was carried away by her emotions and by her natural senses (Gen. 3:6).

b. The woman must be discreet by what she allows herself to think about; by what she reads; by what she watches; by the conversations she has. Many women have

left their husbands and children because they were not careful in these matters; they allowed their minds to be filled with foolish and evil thoughts, and they were eventually carried away by such things.

c. *Discreet* also refers to exercising wisdom. The young women must learn how to make good wise choices in all areas.

“chaste” (Titus 2:5)

a. This is the Greek word “hagnos,” which means “clean, innocent, modest” (Strong). It is also translated “clear” (2 Cor. 7:11) and “pure” (Phil. 4:8). It describes a “chaste virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2).

b. The Holy Spirit is emphasizing the moral purity that should characterize a Christian wife and mother. In some ways, women set the standard for morality, both in a church and in society at large. If women are not chaste, everything around them becomes impure. They set the standard in the home as they rear the children.

c. Christian women must be careful not to neglect their responsibilities toward their husbands (1 Cor. 7:3-5). When women keep themselves from their husbands, the result is sexual temptation and sin (1 Cor. 7:2, 5).

d. Likewise, husbands must treat their wives in a godly manner, not merely using them as objects for the fulfillment of their lusts but as loving them and treating them with tenderness and kindness, as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25).

“keepers at home” (Titus 2:5)

a. This is the Greek word “oikouros,” which means “one who guards the house, one who stays at home, domestically inclined.”

b. This does not mean that the woman can do nothing outside of the home.

(1) Comparing Scripture with Scripture, we see that the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31 does many things such as seeking wool and flax (v. 13), bringing her food from afar (v. 14), building a field and planting a vineyard (v. 16), and stretching out her hands to the poor (v. 20), *but her work outside of the home is done in the context of fulfilling her duties as a godly wife and mother and contributing to the blessing of the household and does not cause her to neglect such duties.* When we lived in western Washington for 10

years, my wife Linda bought and sold several parcels of land. In the process of this she learned how to test for septic systems and many other things associated with land sales. On one occasion she figured out a way to make a down payment on one parcel of timbered land, selective cut the large timber on that piece, and use the income from the logs to make the down payment on another parcel. She learned how to measure timber and to calculate its value. With the help of a couple of preacher friends, my sons and I logged that heavily wooded 10-acre parcel by hand in one week. We did everything except skid the logs to the loading area. Linda selected the trees for harvesting and after the trees were down and limbed, she marked the logs for cutting. The income from that work was a great help to our family financially at a time when things were tight and has enabled us to put our children through Bible College. She enjoyed the work and was prosperous in it, but she did not neglect her family in the pursuit of this side job.

(2) What Titus means is that the chief responsibility of the Christian wife and mother is her home and she should not do anything that would cause her to neglect this responsibility. No one can take the place of a wife and mother, and if she neglects her duty toward the husband or children, great harm results.

(3) Each family is responsible to make these decisions before the Lord. Pastors are the teachers and overseers of the assembly, but a pastor is not the head of the homes in the assembly. The husband and father is the sole head of the home under Christ, and he must make these decisions in conjunction with his wife; they are one flesh (Eph. 5:31). The husband and wife do not have the authority to ignore or disobey the Word of God; but they have the authority to interpret the Word of God and to apply it to their family (1 John 2:27). In some cases, for example, the children are in a Christian school and mothers work in the school and church. In such cases, the mothers might actually spend more time with the children than if they stayed at home.

(4) There are extenuating circumstances, of course, that must be taken into account in this context. Sometimes the husband is unable to work, for example, and the wife is called upon to become the “chief bread winner.” We must exercise mercy and grace in such matters. There was room for this type of thing even under the strict law of Moses. For example, though the sabbath was not to be broken and no work was to be done under pain of death, God allowed a man to lift his ox out of the ditch on that day (Lk. 14:5).

c. There is an association between “chaste” and “keepers at home.” “Dinah, when she went to see the daughters of the land, lost her chastity. ... Not but there are occasions, and will be, of going abroad; but a gadding temper for merriment and company sake, to the neglect of domestic affairs, or from uneasiness at being in her place, is the opposite evil intended, which is commonly accompanied with, or draws after it, other evils” (Matthew Henry). One reason modern society has become filled with immorality and divorce is the explosion of the practice of women employed in the secular work force. Many women have thus fallen prey to romantic temptations.

“good” (Titus 2:5)

a. This is the Greek word “agathos,” which is the main word translated “good”; it is also translated “benefit” (Phile. 14) and “well” (Rom. 2:7).

b. This describes the woman’s life overall. She is to be a good woman whose life is filled with good works. Consider Dorcas, who was “full of good works” (Acts 9:36).

c. Good also refers to the woman’s spirit (1 Pet 3:4). “It may also have, as some think, a more particular sense; one of a meek and yet cheerful spirit and temper, not sullen nor bitter; not taunting nor fretting and galling any; not of a trouble-some or jarring disposition, uneasy in herself and to those about her; but of a good nature and pleasing conversation, and likewise helpful by her advice and pains” (Matthew Henry).

“obedient to their own husbands” (Titus 2:5)

a. This is the wife’s chief duty toward her husband, who is her head under Christ (1 Cor. 11:3).

(1) There is a limit to the husband’s authority over the wife. The woman is to submit to her husband “as unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22-24) and “as it is fit in the Lord” (Col. 3:18). This means that the husband cannot require the wife to do anything that the Lord would not require of her.

(2) A wife’s godly subjection to her husband and her meek and quiet spirit is a powerful thing that can even win an unsaved man to Christ (1 Pet. 3:1-6).

b. According to modern secular philosophy, the woman is equal to her husband in authority and submission is demeaning. This is strictly contrary to the Scriptures, and the Christian woman who follows this thinking is in open rebellion to God.

“that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:5)

The reason why the Christian woman should live the kind of life described in this passage is to glorify her Lord and Saviour. If she lives in sensuality and rebellion, she causes the Word of God to be blasphemed. The unsaved are looking at the churches and at professing Christians and they judge God and His Word by what they see.

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